

# Clover growers face herbicide impasse

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

An herbicide used on soybeans has proven tantalizingly effective against two troublesome weeds in Oregon clover fields, but remains out of reach for farmers.

Despite performing well in killing dock and tiny vetch during field trials, Python — the brand name for flumetsulam — did in some “outlier” cases cause damage to clover foliage.

Those instances of crop injury were enough to dissuade Dow AgroSciences, the herbicide’s manufacturer, from seeking to extend the chemical’s label registration to include clover in the U.S.

Because clover is grown on relatively few acres, the possibility for the company to earn a small profit is negated by the potential for lawsuits, said Bryan Ostlund, administrator of the Oregon Clover Commission.

“Any liability issue becomes magnified,” he said.

Dow AgroSciences did not respond to requests for comment as of press time.

While the Oregon Clover Commission has reached an

impasse with Dow, the organization is still hoping to provide farmers with access to Python through another path.

At its Oct. 10 meeting in Salem, Ore., the commission unanimously voted to continue paying a consultant to explore the possibility of extending the herbicide’s federal registration to clover through an entity other than Dow.

One option would be for a smaller chemical company that specializes in niche crops to license the herbicide from Dow, taking on any liability as well as the responsibility of registering Python with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The other possibility is for a “third party registrant” — such as an agronomy company — to perform those functions at the commission’s behest, which isn’t seen as a desirable outcome.

“It gets expensive real fast,” said Ostlund.

Dock and tiny vetch are an expensive problem for clover farmers because no other currently registered herbicides can treat the weeds, said Nicole Anderson, an Oregon State University Extension field crops agent.

# Jensen, Cornelison appointed to Idaho Potato Commission

By BRAD CARLSON  
Capital Press

Idaho Gov. Butch Otter appointed Brett Jensen and Todd Cornelison to the Idaho Potato Commission, effective at the nine-member panel’s Oct. 24 meeting. Otter also reappointed Dan Nakamura.

Jensen succeeds James Hoff as a grower-member. Cornelison succeeds Lynn Wilcox as a fresh-pack shipper. Hoff completed one three-year term, Wilcox two.



Brett Jensen



Todd Cornelison

Industry peers nominate and the governor selects commission members. The commission must include five growers, two fresh-pack shippers and two processors. Commissioners are limited to two terms. Appointees to the Potato Commission do not require Senate confirmation, said Skyler Kjellander, a staff assistant in Otter’s office.

Jensen owns Brett Jensen Farms, a 13,000-acre operation in the Idaho Falls-Hamer area. The farm grows potatoes for the fresh and processing markets.

“I am excited to join the commission, learn, and see if I can help the Idaho potato industry,” Jensen said. “I’m not going in with an agenda. I need to get there and learn what I can do to help.”

He will draw on input from industry peers in southeast Idaho, he said. He is a National Potato Council board member and past chairman of the U.S. Potato Board-Potatoes USA.

“I’m proud to be an Idaho potato grower and I want to help with the Idaho potato industry any way I can,” said Jensen, who has one son active in farming and another who plans to farm. “I want to protect the industry for future generations.”

He grew up on a farm about 10 miles from his current operations. “Dad wasn’t ready to quit, so I started my own,” he said.

Jensen in 1995 started his business, which grew over the years in part through expansion prompted by neighbors approaching him about their desire to leave farming. His farm also produces wheat, barley seed and alfalfa hay, he said. Potatoes grown are Russet Burbank, Ranger Russet and Russet Norkotah.

Food traceability and environmental sustainability are among continuing trends, Jensen said. “The technology helps with that. We have to have a safe product to sell,” he said.

Cornelison, owner and CEO at fresh-pack shipper High Country Potato in Rexburg, served as the commission’s first industry relations director, based in eastern Idaho, from 2007 to 2012. He acquired the packing business from his father in 2007 but leased it to another operator until 2012, when the lease expired and he began running the business.

“It is an honor, and I appreciate all of the support of the industry,” he said of his appointment as commissioner.

The commission benefits from each member’s expertise in a particular segment of the Idaho potato industry, but “every commissioner deals with every aspect,” Cornelison said. “The job of every commissioner is to protect the industry as a whole.”

He’s going into the commissioner position “knowing it takes real time and effort to protect this wonderful industry we are part of,” he said. “I fully intend to do that.”

On the fresh-pack side, increasing the consistency of recently erratic grower returns — the payments the packers make to growers — is an issue, Cornelison said. Traditional supply-and-demand factors, and variations as to where packers’ customers buy potatoes, are at play.

# Apples still top crop in Washington

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — Agricultural production in Washington grew 4 percent to \$10.6 billion in 2017 with apples as the top value commodity for the 13th year in a row, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

At \$2.43 billion, apples represented 23 percent of the total agricultural value. That was up 3 percent from 2016 but shy of the record high of \$2.48 billion in 2012.

Noting that all Washington tree fruit combined exceeded \$3.2 billion, Desmond O’Rourke, retired Washington State University agricultural economist and world apple analyst, called that impressive given trade disruptions of the past year.

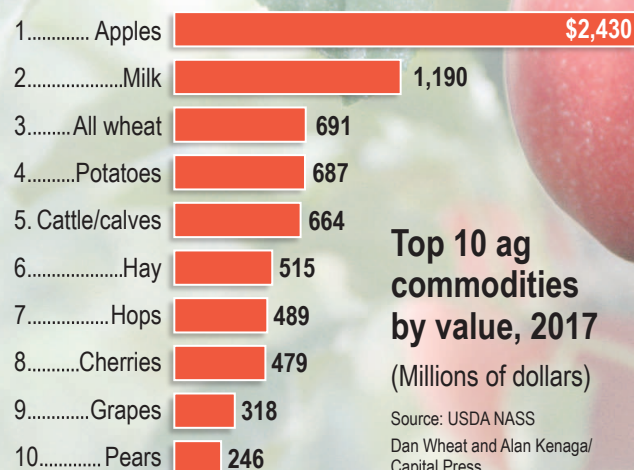
Mainstream apple varieties such as Gala, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious and Braeburn continue to struggle while proprietary varieties continue to expand and generate higher prices, O’Rourke said.

“However, competition among the club (proprietary) varieties is likely to intensify as production expands and the arrival of the new Cosmic Crisp in 2019 will add to the pressures,” he said.

Honeycrisp continues “to defy the odds,” he said, maintaining premium prices and wide retail promotions despite increasing in sales by 36.7 percent in 2017.

The Oct. 10 report from

## Apples still tops in Washington



the NASS Northwest regional office in Olympia lists milk in second place, at \$1.19 billion, up 8 percent from 2016.

Wheat value of production moved up two spots to take the third position in the state rankings. Wheat value in 2017 was \$691 million, up 5 percent from the previous year. Potatoes, valued at \$687 million, fell one spot to fourth. This represents a 16 percent decrease from the previous year. Cattle and calves rounded out the top five with a value of \$664 million, down 6 percent from the previous year.

The top five commodities had a combined value of \$5.66 billion, or 54 percent of the

2017 value for all commodities, excluding government payments. The same five commodities in 2016 had a combined value of \$5.62 billion, or 55 percent of the total 2016 value.

Hay ranked sixth at \$515 million, up 7.7 percent. Hops were seventh at a record high \$489 million, up 28 percent. Cherries were next at \$479 million, down 4.2 percent, and grapes, at \$318 million, were down 11.4 percent. Pears, ranking 10th, were a record \$246 million, up 4.5 percent from 2016 and 1 percent from the previous record high in 2014.

Other commodities outside the top 10 that showed signif-

icant increases in value from the previous year were: eggs at \$141 million, up 21 percent; blueberries at \$115 million, up 22 percent; and canola at \$15.1 million, up 64 percent.

Four of the top 10 commodities declined in value from the previous year: potatoes, cattle and calves, cherries and grapes.

Other notable commodities that declined in value in 2017 were onions, down 30 percent to \$130 million; lentils, down 31 percent to \$18.4 million; and dry edible peas, down 40 percent to \$15.7 million.

Crop production totaled a little over \$8 billion and livestock a little over \$2.5 billion.

# California winery works with investigators on label controversy

By GEORGE PLAVEN  
Capital Press

The owner of a Napa Valley winery accused by Oregon winemakers of using deceptive labels says he is working with both state and federal investigators, while describing the controversy as a “charade.”

Copper Cane LLC, of Rutherford, Calif., buys grapes from about 50 growers in Oregon to make Pinot noir and rosé wines. Two brands in particular, “The Willametter Journal” and “Elouan,” have raised suspicion among Oregon winemakers that the labels and packaging falsely imply the wines originate in the state’s high-value American Viticultural Areas, or AVAs.

The dispute is now on the radar of Oregon congressional delegates, who sent a letter Oct. 9 to the federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau requesting an investigation into Copper Cane’s labels.

But Joe Wagner, who owns and operates the winery, said the agency already visited and began combing through production records weeks ago.

“As far as we see it, we are still doing things the right way,” Wagner told the Capital Press.



EOMG File

A California winery has been criticized by Oregon winemakers over references to “Willamette” on some of its wine labels.

make any false, ambiguous or misleading statements about the wine’s origin.

That is where Oregon winemakers take issue with “The Willametter Journal,” a Pinot noir that mentions “the Willamette region of Oregon’s coastal range” on its label. Industry leaders feel that could wrongly imply the wine comes from the Willamette Valley AVA.

“Elouan” also prominently lists the Willamette Valley, Umpqua Valley and Rogue Valley on its retail cases, all three of which are designated AVAs in Oregon.

Jana McKamey, vice president of government affairs with the Oregon Wine-

growers Association, said the industry has been at the forefront of protecting its wine regions and truth-in-labeling. “The (industry’s) priority is to assist state and federal regulatory agencies in ensuring all wineries, wherever they are crushing grapes, comply with federal regulations and Oregon’s 41-year-old labeling rules that are designed to protect the integrity of Oregon’s esteemed winegrowing regions,” McKamey said in a statement.

In their joint letter to the TTB Administrator John Manfreda, Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, along with Reps. Peter DeFazio, Earl Blumenauer, Suzanne Bonamici and Kurt Schrader stated that if any of Copper Cane’s labels are out of compliance the products should be removed from the market.

Wagner, the Copper Cane owner, said he is still awaiting a final decision from the TTB. The winery is also in regular contact with the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which asked to review production, transfer and bottling records for seven wines, including “The Willametter Journal” and “Elouan” brands. A spokesman for OLCC said that review is currently in process.

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